



**CITY OF**

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# **NEWPORT BEACH**

## **City Council Staff Report**

November 30, 2021  
Agenda Item No. 10

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Mark Vukojevic, Utilities Director - 949-644-3011,  
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**TITLE:** Resolution No. 2021-123: Supporting a Ban on New Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling

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### **ABSTRACT:**

At the November 16, 2021 meeting, the City Council voted 6 to 1, via a straw poll, in favor of staff bringing forward a resolution for the Council's consideration, expressing support for a ban on new offshore oil and gas drilling.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and;
- b) Adopt Resolution No. 2021-123, *A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, California, Supporting a Ban on New Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling.*

### **DISCUSSION:**

In October 2021, a significant oil spill occurred off the Southern California coast, affecting Newport's beaches and harbor, damaging wildlife, and impacting recreation and commercial activities. At the November 16, 2021 City Council meeting, Mayor Brad Avery and Council Member Duffy Duffield requested that the City Council consider placing an item on a future Council agenda that, if adopted, would express its support for banning new offshore oil and gas drilling. The City Council voted 6 to 1, via a straw poll, in favor of staff bringing forward a resolution for the Council's consideration.

The City of Newport Beach (City) Charter, approved in 1958 and updated in 2010, speaks to the City's existing ban on new offshore oil drilling within the City's boundaries which extend approximately three miles beyond the shoreline. Beyond that, the coastal waters are further under the control of the state and federal governments. The State of California (State) prohibits new oil and gas leasing in State waters. At times, there are discussions about the federal government allowing new offshore oil and gas drilling and leasing. There does not appear to be a current project or request for new oil drilling. Many cities along the Southern California coast, recently including the City of Huntington Beach, have approved resolutions banning new offshore oil drilling.

The proposed resolution states that the City of Newport Beach supports a ban on new offshore oil and gas drilling in federal and state waters off the coast of California. The City itself operates 16 of its own legacy oil wells. These are managed by the Utilities Department and the revenue partially funds tideland operations. Under the City's Charter and the proposed resolution, the City's oil operations, including its maintenance and capital activities, would be allowed to continue. Eventually, as oil production ceases, those wells would be properly shutdown and abandoned by the City according to State guidelines.

If adopted, Resolution No. 2021-123 (Attachment A) would convey that the City Council supports banning new offshore oil and gas drilling off the California coast.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no City fiscal impact related to this item.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

**NOTICING:**

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item)

**ATTACHMENT:**

Attachment A - Resolution No. 2021-123